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General Questions about the Program

1. Q: Why was this program created?

A: EPAP was created in 2008 to help staff posts overseas during a period when the Department was not able to bring in enough Entry Level Officers to handle the workload at posts. The program also seeks to address the need for more professional opportunities inside our U.S. Missions overseas. EPAP currently provides 186 professional level Foreign Service positions to Appointment Eligible Family Members (AEFMs).

2. Q: What happened to the old Professional Associates (PA) Program?

A: The PA program, by which Appointment Eligible Family Members (AEFMs) could apply to fill existing Foreign Service (FS) positions, still exists in conjunction with the Foreign Service Hard-to-Fill Program held annually in the spring. This program is administered by HR/CDA Mid-Level Division. The program goal is the same: to expand professional opportunities for AEFMs while benefitting posts overseas. Under the expansion of the PA program, the Department has created new positions specifically for AEFMs, separate from the FS bidding pool, to help meet posts' ongoing staffing needs.

3. Q: Will AEFMs still be able to apply for hard-to-fill FS positions?

A: Yes. The Department sends out an announcement annually, usually in the spring of each year, with a list of vacant FS positions for which AEFMs may apply. However the Program is limited to about ten positions for AEFMs.

Eligibility

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1. Q: Is there an age restriction to apply for the program?

A: Yes. On the date you are hired, you must be at least 18 years old.

2. Q: Is the AEFM of a USG military service member eligible for the program?

A: If the military service member is under Chief of Mission authority, yes. If the military service member is not under Chief of Mission authority, the family member is not eligible.

3. Q: Can military annuitants apply for this program?

A: Yes, military annuitants are eligible for appointment under a Family Member Appointment (FMA).

4. Q: Can Foreign Service (FS)/Civil Service (CS) annuitants apply for this program?

A: Yes, but there are special considerations. Please contact FLOaskEPAP@state.gov before you submit your application and note that you are a FS/CS annuitant and we will work to resolve the issue of your eligibility.

5. Q: Can Civil Service employees apply for this program?

A: Only if they are also an AEFM of a Foreign, Civil, or uniformed service member officially assigned to an overseas post and under Chief of Mission authority. In this situation, the CS employee will need to obtain reemployment rights from his or her originating bureau. If a CS employee is not also an AEFM, he or she is not eligible for the program.

6. Q: Can FS tandem spouses who are on LWOP apply for this program?

A: Yes, however, the Director General of the Foreign Service determined that Appointment Eligible Family Members (AEFM) who are **not** Foreign Service Employees on Leave Without Pay (LWOP) will have hiring preference over AEFMs who are Foreign Service Employees on LWOP for Family Member Appointments (FMA) and Expanded Professional Associates Program (EPAP) positions.

7. Q: Must I be at the same post as my sponsoring employee?

A: You must reside in the same city as your sponsoring employee. There are a few cities, such as Brussels and Geneva, in which there are multiple posts. In this case, you may apply for an EPAP position at a separate post, but reside in the same city, as your sponsoring employee. The idea of regional positions being established in one post while the EFM doing the work and resides in another post is being explored but no decisions have been made at this time.

8. Q: Can I telecommute to an Expanded Professional Associates Position?

A: No. Not at this time.

9. Q: Can I job-share?

A: Generally no, certain positions may be designated as job-share possible. These will be noted on the list of positions posted online.

10. Q: I am a dual national (U.S. plus other citizenship). Can I apply?

A: Yes. However, you may not apply for positions in the country in which you hold citizenship, unless the relevant geographic bureau confirms that you would be granted diplomatic immunity and accredited to serve. In addition, if you know that you have Diplomatic Security preclusion against serving in a particular country, you may not apply for EPAP positions in that country.

11. Q: My sponsoring employee is transferring in this upcoming summer transfer cycle and is bidding on a post where there is an EPAP position open immediately. Can I apply for this position?

A: Yes. You may apply for positions that open in a different transfer season than your own, but you will be most competitive for positions that open in your transfer season. You will not be able to start working as a Professional Associate until your sponsoring employee is at post.

12. Q: I am currently at the post where there is an EPAP position being advertised for the upcoming summer. My sponsoring employee is departing post in the next assignment cycle. I'd like to start work now as an EPAP, for the last year that we'll be at post. May I apply for this position?

A: Yes. You may apply for positions that are open in a different transfer season than your own, but you will be most competitive for positions that open in your same transfer season. You may only apply for EPAP positions at your current post if your sponsoring employee's TED has a least one full year left at post or later. You may only be hired if the bureau is able to offer you the position with a starting date that is one year from your sponsoring employee's Tour End Date from post, so that you will be able to actually serve one full year in the position before transferring from post.

13. Q: I don't know where we will be posted next year. Can I apply for the program generally?

A: Yes, and we encourage all individuals who are interested in working in EPAP to apply. Positions may become available between open seasons and having a pool of qualified candidates allows for the position to be filled. We recommend however that you only apply for the positions which you would seriously consider accepting.